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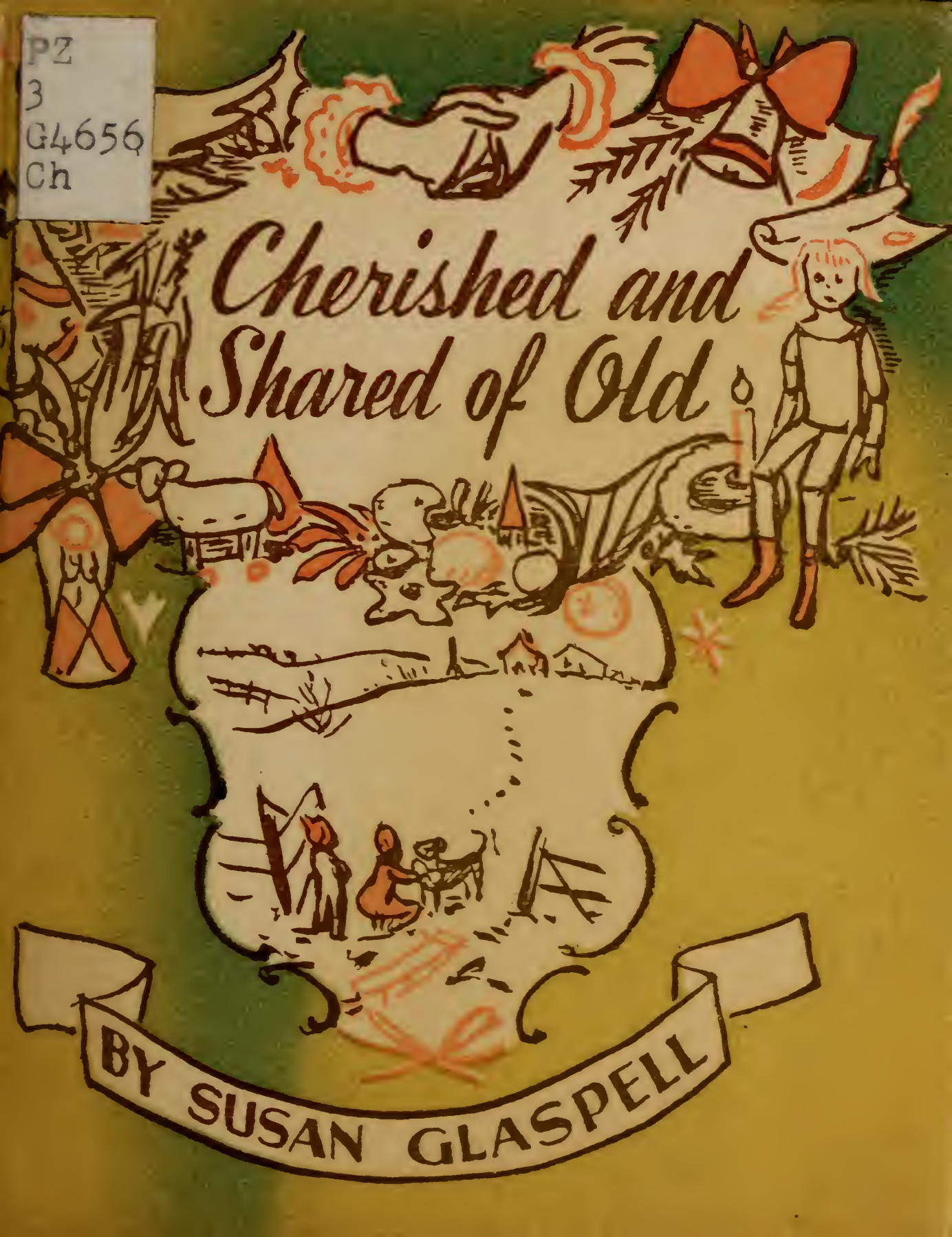
Cherished and Shared of Old



BY SUSAN GLASPELL

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Cherished and shared of old,

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AH.

FOR KARL

AND

SUSAN MARIE MEYER

CHERISHED AND SHARED OF OLD

BY SUSAN GLASPELL

Though we know that never a longing mortal
Gains life best—Oh, better it is to pray for
Part in what we cherished and shared of old than
Fail to remember.

ATTRIBUTED TO SAPPHO
ADAPTATION BY GEORGE CRAM COOK

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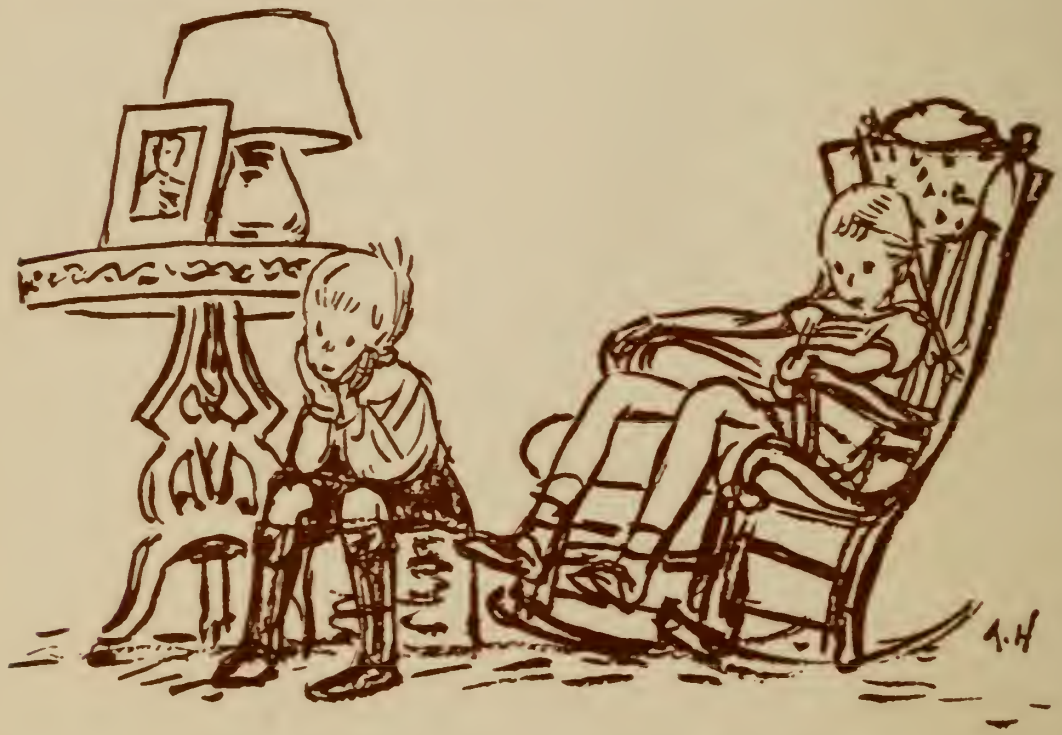
THANK goodness for the snow, thought Addie Morrison, as she watched the two children racing round the barn. And she was thinking it was nice there were some things that were everywhere—most everywhere: like sun and rain, like the wind and the snow, so's when you were sent far from your home there were these things—like the stars—to make you feel a little more at home in a distant land.

"Not a soul here they ever knew before," she would think of these two little

Dutch children she'd taken into her home. They were warm now at night—not wandering on a road. They weren't hungry now—mercy no, she'd seen to *that*, but what are they *thinking*, she'd wonder, as at times they'd sit there so gravely. She wished they'd do more things they shouldn't, for when you're too good you must be a little afraid.



She hadn't been able to stand the pictures in the papers—so many tired children wanting to get back home. Her daughter Emmey, in the East, was working for little ones who had been turned out into the world. "Mother dear," she wrote, "I can't get home this Christmas—just can't. But I could send you two children for whom you could make a Christmas—the way you used to for me and Jack. You'll be so sorry for Johanna and Piet, and come to love them; perhaps you'll want them to stay on there with you in our old home. There were always children on the Morrison place."

So once more there were children on the old Morrison place, but could she make a happy Christmas for this little girl

and boy bereft of their own? She could say "Merry Christmas," but could she make their hearts glad? And what is Christmas if there is not warmth within?

"Maybe *you'll* help," she was saying to the turkey she crammed with savory stuffing. "And what about you?" she thought, regarding with favor the mince pies on the shelf.

She didn't even know what they were used to for Christmas. She wished, for just five minutes, she could talk to their mother. "What would they like?" she'd ask. And their mother would reply—eagerly, so anxious: "Oh, if you would give them—" But this mother couldn't speak up for her children—struck down trying to hurry them to safety.

Germans did that. The Schultzes were Germans—over there in their fine house on the hill. And so her heart hardened anew against Emma Schultz—and that was good, for she found it not so easy to hate Emma at Christmas.

Never a Christmas they hadn't shared—all those years they were growing up. In this very kitchen they'd hung around sniffing and tasting. And when they weren't here they were at the Schultzes'. She had two homes — her own and Schultzes'. And Emma had two—her own and the Morrisons'.

And then they had to act like that! Just to get a piece of land that didn't belong to them at all they'd fought John Morrison, best friend they'd had since

they came—greenhorns—into this country. Country where the Morrisons had been since first there were white men in Iowa! Not to her dying day would she forget her father's face that late afternoon he came back from town, and standing by this very table said: "Well, they've won. The court has given them the strip. Don't ask me why. I don't know why. But I do know this! They've won the land—but they've lost the Morrisons. Never again—do you hear me, Addie?—never again can a Morrison be friend to a Schultz."

Oh, she heard him all right, and never forgot. How could she forget, when she saw him change from that day? The land wasn't so very important. But the defeat—bitter words spoken—from that day he be-

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gan to brood, until soon people were saying: "Why Addie, seems like your father is beginning to fail."

But Emil Schultz—*he* didn't fail. As the Morrisons began to have less and less, the Schultzes had more and more. Emma Schultz's land-grabbing father lived on till just last year—and many a snow had fallen since they carried John Morrison to the last land he would know.

So a fine daughter *she* was—letting into her heart memories of those long ago Christmases with Emma Schultz. Memories were tricky things—come Christmastime. Maybe it was because you went on doing the same things. You made the cranberry sauce, trimmed the tree—doing alone the little things you'd done with someone else—with the dearest friend you'd ever had.

For no one had ever taken Emma's place. Who could take the place of the friend with whom you'd shared all those good years of your life? Emma helped her make all her wedding things. Emma was there when her first baby was born. She'd named that daughter Emma. Later she'd thought of changing it—but not

easy to change a name, and anyway she had an aunt named Emma—she got around it that way. And Walter. Emma was to have married Addie's brother Walter. But Walter went away to war—that other time the Germans tried to wreck the world—and he never came back. And they had comforted each other then.

Yes, laughter and sorrow they had shared. And how divided now! That fought-over land connected the Morrison and Schultz farms. Connected only to divide. It wasn't land—it was a gulf, a gulf that had widened with the years. Feeling—that is what lives on. You might even have forgotten what caused it, but it has come to have a life of its own, regardless of what it flamed from long ago. That is

why there is hate in the world—(she half knew this, tried not to know) —hate unreasoning, living on because, one way or other, it got there in the first place; and when a thing has existed a long time it gives you the idea you can't change it—even makes you think you don't want to.

The smells of Christmas brought Emma close to her—Christmas smells trying to make her betray the legacy of hate to which she had been so bitterly loyal! And what if we *did* get many a Christmas dinner together, she thought. Remember the *words*—those very words they spoke!

Yes—the words. How cruel—and again how blessed—were words. They could carry testimony of love, the sympathy that brought heart closer to heart and

warmed the world. And they could blast and wound and kill like those contraptions of the devil man used against man in war. And their life was as long as the life of man.

Longer. For the men who had fought for that land were gone now—her father and Emma's. Walter was gone, and Addie's husband. Her children were in homes of their own and she lived on here at the old place—running down now, and she couldn't do anything about that—and over there on the hill, in her fine new house, lived Emma Schultz. She had a frigidaire, they said—a vacuum and everything to make life easy. She wore a sealskin coat and was proud and cold—how

she'd laugh if she knew poor old Addie Morrison was thinking of the days they'd made the Christmas candy together—remembering how Emma's stocking hung at the Morrisons', and Addie's at the Schultzes'.

"Come in and get warm!" she called to the children. "Stamp hard! Shake!" she cried gaily. They got in a mix-up getting off Piet's ski pants. "You take one leg and I'll take the other," she said to Johanna. Johanna was the little mother, two years older than Piet, who was four.

Addie made a great fuss about this, pretending she couldn't pull so hard, letting on she was going to fall over backward, until Piet laughed out loud and Johanna smiled—her grave little smile that seemed to be feeling its way. "It will take time," Addie told herself. Tomorrow they'd have their presents—sleds and skates, toys and new caps and mufflers and mittens. And tomorrow the Allen children were coming over to play with them. Once she heard them break out in laughter that came because it couldn't help itself—how happy she'd be, as if a little of the weight of misery had lifted from the world. Perhaps Christmas could do that. That was what Christmas was for. She wanted them to be happy as she hadn't wanted anything

in years. That would be *her* Christmas present—a smile not uncertain, a laugh that was happy clear to the inside. People like Schultzes running little children out of their homes! As for her, she was an *American.* She didn't hold with such things. (And way in her heart Addie Morrison knew Emma Schultz didn't hold with them either—but this she couldn't let herself know.)

Well if that little fellow wasn't edging up to the cookie-jar. Good! You must think it's *your* house when you go after the cookie-jar.

Johanna said, in her new careful English, "Thank you," for the cookie; little Piet said something she didn't understand, but he smiled and she knew it was "Thank you."

What funny little cookies the Schultzes used to make for Christmas. Cut in all sorts of shapes—a rabbit, a star, a St. Nicholas and something called a grampus, and supposed to be for the bad child, but it had currants and nuts in it just the same, so who cared? Perhaps Johanna and Piet were used to cookies like that. Yes,

Emma might know more than she did about what these children were used to. But Emma—warm in a fine sealskin coat—what did *she* care?

"Oh—pret-ty," she heard Johanna murmur, and turned to find her fingering a length of red ribbon that was to be tied on the tree.

Addie stood stock-still watching her, for the little girl's fingers moved over the bright stuff so wistfully, as if—as if she had once loved something like this. "Oh you poor little thing," she thought, in a new wave of sympathy and tenderness—anger too. All the little fineries left behind. Only what you needed—not the pretty things to make life gay.

"Time to dress ourselves up for Christ-

mas," she said, slipping the bright broad ribbon under the collar of Johanna's sweater and making a fine red bow.

And then she began to laugh—Emma running after a *pig*, trying to catch the pig to tie a red ribbon round his neck. That was one of the crazy things they did together—dressing up the animals for Christ-

mas. Well Emma caught the pig, but fell down doing it and Emma and pig rolled over and over together—the pig squirm-

ing and Emma clutching. Addie could see them now and she went on laughing, until the children, thinking there must be something very funny indeed, politely joined in.

The snow continued to fall softly, knowing it was Christmas and the world should be white, and after the dinner things were cleared away Addie wondered whether they'd like to be bundled up and go out again. That was the trouble—it was still hard to know for sure what they would like, for it wasn't *their* house yet.

But suddenly it was! What in the world were they looking at out that window—dancing up and down, catching hold of each other and squealing and pointing?

Oh—*dear*. *Now* what? For there he was

—that miserable Schultz dog who came bounding over as if he didn't know a Schultz shouldn't come to the Morrisons'. She started for the door to go chase him away but the children thought she was going to let him in, and they were right upon her, all excited and happy—*natural* —for the first time they really were children. And all because that ugly Schultz dog—for some crazy reason called Doc—was standing there wagging his tail as if waiting for them to come out and play with him.

"Bad dog," she said. "German. Bad German dog,"—though she knew she shouldn't be doing this.

But they didn't care. It didn't seem to make any difference to them that Doc was German. And then Addie knew. It wasn't only the ribbons and the toys had been left behind. The dog had been left behind too. . . .

"We'll get a dog," she said. "A nice dog. This is the homeliest dog ever lived."

And Doc *was* a very funny-looking dog. He wasn't *any* kind of dog—just Doc. He had a bulldog face and crooked legs, but he was sort of a dog of all nations, and Addie knew in her heart that the kindness of all nations came together in Doc, and that Doc was a *good* dog. But he was a Schultz.

She tried to interest them in the dog they would have, but they wanted Doc and wanted him right now; and as Addie saw that first flare-up of joy begin to die down into disappointment, of course she couldn't stand it and there began a mad gay scramble to get them into their clothes so they could rush out and play with Doc Schultz.

Then she remembered they were used to having dogs draw things—pictures of Holland always had dogs drawing little carts—so she hurried into the shut-up front room, where the presents waited in secret, to get the Christmas sled—for might as well be killed for a sheep as a lamb, she thought.

Oh they were so delighted! They could scarcely wait to get out—and then they were all in a scramble together, Doc jump-

ing on them and waving his silly tail—and for goodness sakes if the dog didn't seem to be *grinning*—and the children were laughing and screaming and they all went tearing away together.

And Addie Morrison sat there thinking it was strange—so very strange—that their first happy moment on the Morrison place came through Emma Schultz. She sat there alone remembering her dogs and Emma's — new sleds — and other mad scrambles in the Christmas snow.

Emma Schultz was remembering something herself. She was again a little girl not eight—new to America, a greenhorn. And the children at school stared and laughed at her because she talked funny

and didn't know their ways. But little Addie Morrison—so pretty then—came up and hooked her arm through Emma's and said: "You and me, lets us be friends."

More than anything else in the world she would like to walk over to Addie Morrison now, open the kitchen door just as she used to, and say—"You and me, lets us be friends."

At Christmas it was so hard not to remember. And this Christmas most of all, because again—after all these years—Addie was befriending the stranger. How good of Addie! How good of America! And she wondered if anyone could love America as did the one who had come here a stranger and been taken in.

She was the one to do something for

these children, for who could know better than she what it was to be a child among things not familiar.

She was putting in a big jar the *lebkuchen*, German Christmas cookies she made every year. She wouldn't have had the heart to make them this year, but her mother hadn't many Christmases left and clung to the things she was used to. Next week Emma's Sunday-school class would come for their party, and they'd have these cookies and their presents. But it was lonely here today.

Ten thousand times she'd wished that land in the bottom of the sea. What is land, compared to the love of friends? How gladly she would have given it back. It had changed things for the Schultzes.

Her father grew hard after that and wanted to make money and didn't care about friends. And she herself had to pretend she didn't care, and that made one hard too. The Schultzes didn't like being told they weren't Americans, being shouted at they weren't honest. They'd show them who the Schultzes were! But it had been lonely business, and at Christmas especially she knew there still lived in her heart all she and Addie had loved together, dear things shared. She'd like to cross that strip—and abolish it in crossing —open the kitchen door and see if there wasn't something she could do for these little children against whom a wicked wrong had been worked. But what nonsense. You couldn't change the way things

were, and Addie had grown more bitter with the years. She'd *shut* the door—shut it in Emma Schultz's face.

"Emma! I hear Doc barking," her mother called out to her. "He wants to come in."

She opened her own kitchen door, and yes—there stood Doc. But—*what in the world?* He was all decorated for Christmas. Red ribbon was wound round his collar and tied in a big gay bow. Now who could have done *that?*

And suddenly Emma Schultz sat down —so sure there was only one person in the world could have sent Doc home decorated for Christmas. She and Addie used to do that together. The dogs always had their big red Christmas bows. Addie had

not forgotten! Oh, she had sent a message saying she remembered. And Emma Schultz began hurrying fast as she could—getting the cookies—presents for those she had for her Sunday-school class—for couldn't she get others for them?—filling a big basket, hurrying into her boots, her coat, and out into the snow. It was Christmas! She ran across the strip giving it scarcely a thought, so eager to get to the Morrisons'.

But at the kitchen door she paused. So many years . . . Then she knocked, and Addie opened the door.

"Why—why Emma *Schultz*," she said, as if she didn't know *what* to say.

"Merry Christmas, Addie," said Emma —timidly, bravely.

"Why—why—" And then all of a sudden Addie cried: "Merry Christmas yourself!"—and swiftly added: "For pity sakes come right in out of the snow!"

A little later they were all sitting round the kitchen stove, nibbling the cookies Emma had brought, Emma and Addie drinking tea and the children their cocoa —so cozy in the Morrison kitchen. Yes, Johanna and Piet knew cookies like these, and great fun they had picking out now a new moon, now a little man—Johanna

hugging the doll Emma had brought and Piet dangling the baby panda.

"Emma!" Addie burst out with a laugh —"do you remember the *pig*?"

While they were laughing came a barking and scratching at the door and Johanna and Piet ran to let in their friend Doc.

As the children were busy brushing him off, Emma said, very low: "Oh, Addie—when he came home all fixed up for Christmas—and I knew you had remembered—were telling me you remembered—"

Addie had been sitting with her back to Doc. She turned now, and saw that the bow she had tied on Johanna at this moment adorned Emma's dog Doc.

And Emma thought she had done this! A Schultz thought a Morrison had made the first move.

Ah, there was danger in that moment—danger the world has faced time and again. Old bitter loyalties—resentments of many years—right there, ready to rush in.

But something else came flooding into that moment: It was the children had

done this. The children whom hate had driven here—brought love. How strange that this could be. Like a miracle it seemed.

She was afraid she was going to cry, so when Doc came sniffing up to the stove she said, almost crossly: "Why Emma Schultz—that dog's hungry.

"I'll tell you, children," she went on, "what do you say we give him our beef stew, for tomorrow we'll have turkey."

Doc knew it was to be for him and was dancing all around, his big bow bobbing. "Say Merry Christmas!" cried Addie, holding high the plate. Doc waved a hearty "Merry Christmas"—and they all watched Doc Schultz devour the Morrison stew.

The children clapped their hands at the speed with which he cleaned the plate. Emma and Addie smiled at each other—so much alive and warm between them. Dogs of other years were wearing their Christmas bows and cleaning the plate.

In a changing world of many sorrows it can be sad to remember alone. But when friends share dear memories—a fire in the cold, light in the darkness.

And right there the children began a great clatter, running round in circles with Doc. Why they weren't a *bit* afraid—for all the world as if they knew something had happened there amongst them. Whether they knew it or not, it was true—how blessed and true—that fear flew out through the window when love came in by the door.

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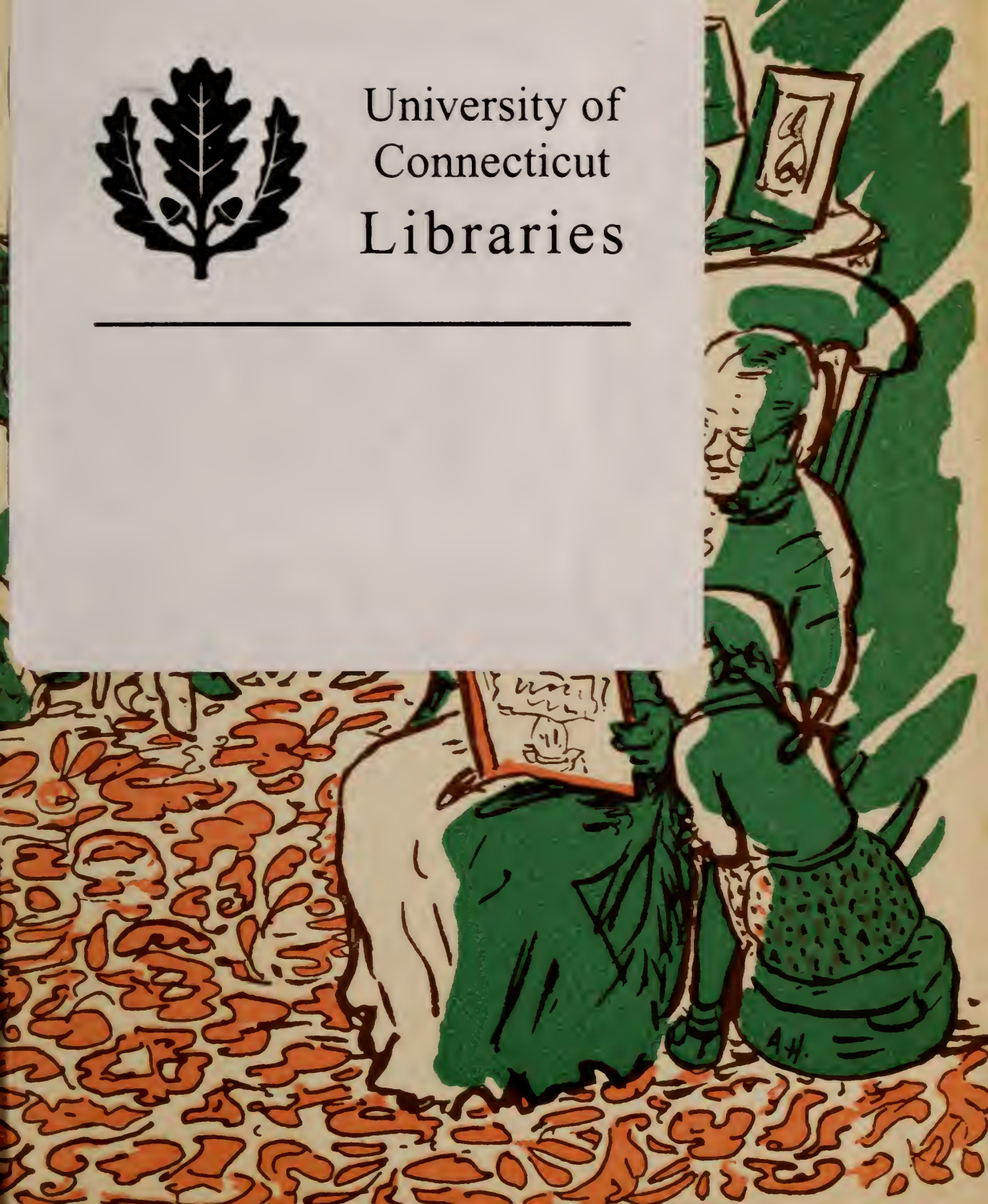

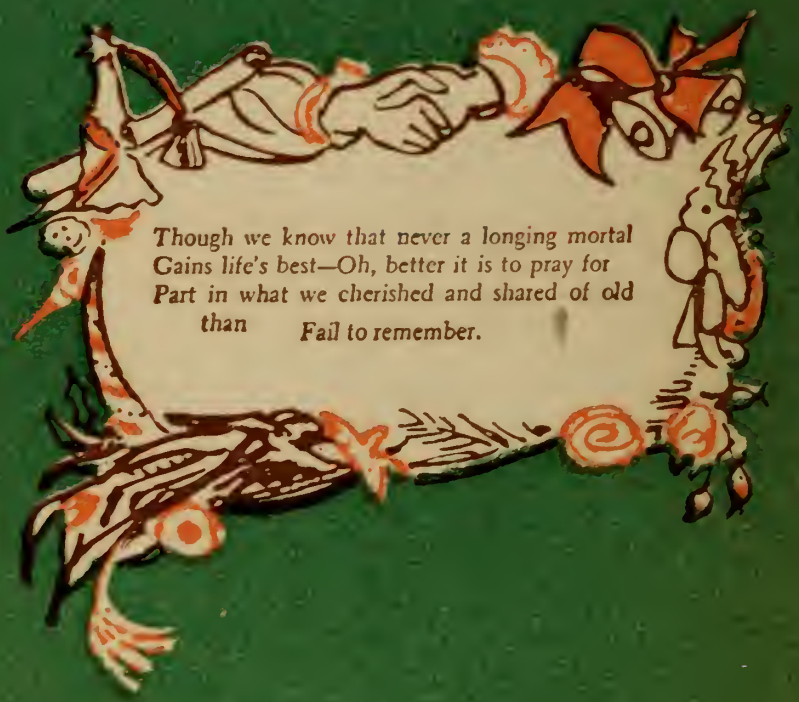
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